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# Neighborhood Networks

## **No Car? No Problem! Innovative Transportation Solutions**

June 1999

U.S. Department of Housing  
and Urban Development  
Office of Housing-Multifamily  
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**NO CAR? NO PROBLEM!**  
**INNOVATIVE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS**  
**JUNE 1999**

This publication was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the planning and development of Neighborhood Networks centers.

The guides in this series offer "how to" information on starting up a center, creating programs and identifying center partners; center and program profiles and a wealth of resources.

Neighborhood Networks is a community-based initiative established by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1995. Since then, hundreds of centers have opened throughout the United States. These centers provide residents of HUD-assisted and/or -insured properties with programs, activities and training promoting economic self-sufficiency. These guides contain examples of successful center initiatives and how you can replicate them.

To receive copies of this publication or any others in the series, contact:

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# No Car? No Problem!

## Innovative Transportation Solutions

"Wheels are power in America today. With them, people have personal freedom. Without them they are captives. Wheels can mean the difference between living in comfort and living in poverty. Those who own wheels can set their own course. Those who don't can only hope that their needs will show up on someone else's agenda.

*The Community Transportation Association of America*

### The Transportation Challenge

Transportation plays a critical role in providing the access to jobs that are needed by persons leaving welfare and seeking to become self-sufficient. Only six percent of welfare families own a car. This fact, combined with inflexible public transit systems serving most of the country, prevents many would-be wage earners from seeking employment in the job-rich suburbs, from working late evening shifts or from commuting to distant employment sites. This guide seeks to provide Neighborhood Networks centers with ideas, examples and tools that can be used to enhance transportation services meeting the unique needs of residents and overcome these barriers. The guide focuses on the efforts of one community, not because that community's example offers the "perfect model" to follow or because it is an overwhelming success, but that its experience provide insight and guidance to other communities considering improvements to their transportation services.

The *Transportation Challenge* describes a small transit system created by residents of public housing to address their particular transportation problems. It discusses the context in which the transit system was developed, how it was started, strategies that residents pursued to reach their objectives, barriers they faced, lessons they have learned and issues of sustainability that they face to ensure ongoing services. Finally, it describes resources available to assist in the development of transportation services, examples of responses to transportation needs in other communities and transportation activities currently serving Neighborhood Networks sites.

### United Resident Council Transit Mini-Transit to Jobs Program

#### Description of the Program

After carefully assessing the formidable barriers to self-sufficiency they faced daily, the residents of a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., housing complex created a nonprofit to develop and carry out activities improving their potential for progress. The first activity of the newly created organization, the United Resident Council (URC), was to start a transit company to provide transportation for residents to jobs in the suburbs. Using vans provided by the local housing authority and the city, the URC trained and hired residents as drivers. During non-commuting hours, the vans are used to transport residents to shopping centers, grocery stores, interviews and social services. As part of the URC's effort to break down barriers to employment, they host job fairs for major employers and then provide rides to work for residents hired.

URC Transit was created by the URC, a nonprofit organization composed of residents in public housing owned by the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority, for the purpose of expanding residents' access to employment and services.

In February 1997, the first resident stepped on board a URC Transit van to begin operation of specialized transportation services for residents of public-assisted housing in Fort Lauderdale. Since that time, the resident-run transit system has proven its worth to the community by transporting hundreds of residents to their job sites, critical services and community

events, and it has developed into a viable operation with three vehicles serving residents at nine properties.

A partnership of local governmental agencies and residents, each providing critical ingredients, was formed to start the transit program. Each partner continues to play an important role in ensuring the success of the operation.

#### *Partners and Their Roles*

- ☐ **United Resident Council (URC).** The resident-based nonprofit organization developed to plan and carry out initiatives to increase resident self-sufficiency.
- ☐ **URC Transit.** The resident-run operational arm of the URC for transit services.
- ☐ **Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority.** The housing authority provides two vans for operation, performs vehicle maintenance, trains drivers and dispatchers and provides space for transit operations.
- ☐ **Broward County Mass Transit (BCMT).** BCMT, a division of Broward County government, initially provided technical assistance and grant-writing services, and later, financial assistance for equipment. Included were Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds of \$20,000 per year for three years to assist in operation costs. They helped URC obtain a one-year grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation for maintenance and operation costs.
- ☐ **City of Fort Lauderdale.** The city provided a 16-passenger, handicapped-accessible, low-floor mini-bus in May 1998. In addition, it gave URC Transit \$32,000 per year in CDBG funds for operating the transit program over the next three years.
- ☐ **The Business Community.** Several businesses, most notably the Boca Raton Resort, committed to employ residents and to conduct job interviews at the URC sponsored job fairs. One business also helps job candidates obtain their driver's licenses.
- ☐ **The Florida Department of Transportation.** The state has awarded a one-year, \$20,000 grant to assist with expenses for maintenance, driver and dispatcher salaries, fuel and marketing.

Today, URC Transit provides transportation service to residents of the nine housing authority properties consisting of 928 apartments. URC Transit provides residents with rides to job sites as part of an overall strategy to increase opportunities for self-sufficiency. It regularly transports 10 people to their job sites throughout the workweek. While residents of the housing authority properties are given priority, other low-income community members are also served. Daily pickups and drop-offs are scheduled at three sites from 7-8 a.m. and from 4-5 p.m. As part of its ongoing effort to increase employment opportunities for residents, URC maintains strong relationships with key businesses and hosts job fairs for major

employers two or three times a year. These on-site recruiting trips are typically attended by 60-80 residents and generally result in the hiring of 10-15 residents.

In addition to transporting residents for employment purposes, the vans and buses are used to transport residents to services and activities. Twenty to 30 families per week are given rides to midday job interviews and tests, services, shopping and youth events. Finally, special shopping trips for 10 to 12 seniors are scheduled periodically. Residents arrange for rides by calling the URC Transit dispatcher 48 hours before transportation is needed.



An added spinoff of the program is employment and job skills development opportunities for four residents. Scheduling, dispatching, bookkeeping and management of the operation are the responsibility of an office manager/dispatcher hired by URC Transit. The office manager/dispatcher is accountable to the 18-member resident board of the URC. Three part-time drivers operate the vehicles. The URC Transit job skills training programs are also open to others who are not employed by URC Transit. To date, six people have completed driver training for commercial licenses through the training program. URC Transit currently employs three of the six graduates, and the others have obtained jobs with businesses in the area.

*For further information on the United Resident Council Transit Project, contact:*

Mercedes Brown-McVane  
Personnel Director  
United Resident Council  
Telephone: 954-467-7818

Working together, this partnership has begun to make strides in bridging some of the gaps in transportation confronting residents of the Fort Lauderdale HUD-assisted housing.

### **The Problem to be Solved**

Until 1997, when URC Transit began providing service, many of the 2,500 residents in the nine apartment complexes managed by the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority had few choices when it came to transportation to work. Public transportation provided by BCMT met many of the needs of county residents. However, like many other metropolitan systems in the nation, the county transit system was designed to bring people from the suburbs to their jobs in the city. Nationwide, two out of every three new jobs are located in the suburbs, and urban job seekers face a difficult, if not impossible task, of commuting to work.

When new businesses began locating to the suburbs of Fort Lauderdale, people living in the city found bus service to the suburbs inadequate. In the

metropolitan area, most of the new jobs were located in suburban shopping malls and the office and industrial parks of Dade and Broward counties. Residents of the city's older residential areas, where most of the low- and moderate-income families live, travel 20 to 30 miles to reach these new jobs. They had little choice but to ride public transit for up to 90 minutes, making several transfers, in order to arrive at work on time. In addition, several large employers in the suburbs simply were not accessible by public transportation.

For many of Fort Lauderdale's low-income residents, going to work in their own car is not an option. Few residents of public housing own reliable vehicles. While residents want steady, well-paying work, they often cannot find it or decline their job offers due to a lack of transportation. With either no job or a low paying job, they have neither the money nor the credit to purchase and maintain the car they need to reach those better jobs.

Ironically, some suburban employers have had difficulty finding qualified job applicants able to commute to their job sites. The URC turned this situation into a positive factor by securing commitments from businesses to recruit employees from the apartments in return for ensuring transportation for those hired.

Inadequate transportation can create multiple problems for persons with limited income. Difficulties in reaching job sites combined with the lack of accessible, affordable child care make transportation an insurmountable barrier to finding and keeping jobs. According to a Fort Lauderdale welfare office director, "Without question, it is extremely difficult to negotiate the public transportation system. And when you have to deal with child care on top of that, it just compounds the issue."

The lack of mobility also causes difficulty in meeting other daily needs such as travel to shopping, keeping medical and dental appointments and reaching needed services.

### A Day in the Life of a Parent Lacking Adequate Transportation

One Fort Lauderdale Public Housing resident and mother of two young children without a car, but with a job in Boca Raton, typically spends 3 1/2 hours of her day commuting. Her day begins at 4:30 a.m. preparing her children for school and child care. Leaving her apartment at 5:30 a.m. to walk her youngest to child care (which she was fortunate enough to find within blocks of her home), she must hurry back to the apartment to meet the 6 a.m. school bus that picks up her school-age child. She then walks to the BCMT bus stop just in time to catch the local bus for the 20-minute ride to the Main Broward County Bus Terminal. Next, she relaxes for one hour and 20 minutes on the bus ride to Boca Raton. Timing is critical since the buses to Boca Raton only run every 30 minutes during the commuting hours. After leaving work, she retraces her steps, picking up her oldest child from an after-school program and taking time to shop for groceries. Typically, she arrives home to begin preparing dinner at 7:45 p.m., barring any delays in traffic, bus breakdowns, or the need to run other errands.

### Getting Started — First Steps

URC developed transportation strategies to respond to the long

commuting times faced by residents. Their strategies, development process and public-private partnerships provide excellent examples for Neighborhood Networks centers and other groups seeking to provide transportation services. Within a short period of time, the residents made major strides in bridging some of the transportation gaps they faced on a daily basis. Today, URC Transit provides transportation to jobs and services, helps match residents with employers seeking new recruits and transports seniors to distant shopping sites. While many groups talk about developing partnerships, URC Transit clearly demonstrates success in having built strong working partnerships between the residents, federal, state, city and county governments, the housing authority, BCMT and local businesses.

Residents organized themselves to follow a number of key steps toward solving their transportation problems:

1. In 1994, resident groups formed a task force and began meeting with management of the housing authority to discuss barriers to resident self-sufficiency. These meetings with the Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority executive director

"We didn't know anything about transportation when we started."

— Mercedes Brown-McVane  
 United Resident Council member

and his staff led to a mutual agreement to work together to improve opportunities for residents to succeed. Lack of transportation was identified among the major impediments to success.

2. It soon became clear that creating a nonprofit organization was critical to gaining the legal status needed to receive public funds for transportation services. Task force members found setting up a nonprofit was more difficult than anticipated. Before filing papers with the State of Florida to attain 501(c)(3) status as a nonprofit organization, the group had to establish bylaws and articles of incorporation, create financial accountability systems, set up an organizational framework and elect officers.
3. The creation of the URC as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization provided the group with both a legal foundation and a much-needed emotional lift. They now had the status needed to work with government agencies. The 18-member URC board and representatives of the city and the county began meeting regularly to develop a plan of action.
4. To validate its ideas about the needs of the area, the URC surveyed the community, including the surrounding neighborhoods. The survey established community needs and suggested potential actions to create a positive, supportive atmosphere for the education and employment of residents. "Transportation and child care really stuck out as the two greatest barriers to self-

sufficiency," according to Mercedes Brown-McVane, head of the URC Transportation Committee.

5. Armed with the results of the survey, the URC formed a transportation committee in September 1996 to focus on strategies for developing resources. Three members, headed by Ms. Brown-McVane, formed a core working group within the committee. In exploratory meetings with officials of BCMT, committee members learned that technical assistance was available from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). CTAA and its National Transit Resource Center offered to send two advisors to help the community organize its planning and development effort. Barbara Rasin Price of CTAA and Ed Outler, a volunteer in the CTAA Peer Program, met with Ms. Brown-McVane, Bill Smith of the Boca Raton Resort and officials of Broward County six times during the next few months. The group explored project concepts, determined the steps necessary to initiate a local transit project, identified potential resources and developed strategies to obtain needed financing. The meetings resulted in the identification of two important issues: URC needed a strategic plan to develop financial resources, and success was dependent on continuing cooperation of both city and county governments.

### Formulating Strategies

In the course of developing the transit service, the URC followed a careful planning process that assessed existing strengths of the community before establishing strategies and mobilizing resources.

"Persons coming off welfare are not used to being in the workforce. It is difficult enough just to adjust to a work environment. A strong focus is needed to succeed. We don't need distractions or reasons why we can't regularly show up for work."

— Mercedes Brown-McVane  
United Resident Council member

### Assessing Resources and Partners

Developing a strategy to mobilize existing resources and aggressively seeking new resources and partners were keys to the success of URC Transit. Early in the planning process, URC board members identified the following assets available to accomplish their goals:

- ☐ As an elected body representing a significant number of consumers and potential employees, the URC is able to speak with authority. As a nonprofit organization, it can receive and administer public funds, provide a voice for the tenants and community and organize volunteers.
- ☐ The residents and other community members are a ready source of potential employees. Residents are also consumers of the transit services, drivers and employees of URC Transit.
- ☐ The Fort Lauderdale Housing Authority, as owner-manager of the apartments, has a vested interest in the success of a transportation program aimed at increasing resident stability and self-sufficiency. The housing authority is also experienced in vehicle purchase, maintenance and operation. In addition, the housing authority has a history of successful contractual relationships with the city.
- ☐ Local government agencies (in this case, both the City of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County) offer broad planning expertise and they are potential funding sources. In addition, linkages and partnerships with local government are often prerequisites for federal funding and foundation grants.
- ☐ Broward County Mass Transit, a division of Broward County government, offers transportation planning and operations expertise, provides links to financial resources and is a source for financial assistance and equipment.
- ☐ The federal government and national transportation associations have a wealth of information on existing programs and often have a mandate to provide technical assistance to community-based transportation efforts.

Additionally, they are a source of funding for operations and equipment. See descriptions of these organizations at the end of this guide.

- The business community, particularly large employers, plays a critical role as the source of jobs. Employers can also provide transportation solutions that include on-site child care, free or discounted bus passes and flexible work hours to respond to employee commuting options and family needs.

### Setting Strategies

After assessing potential resources, the URC set about putting the pieces together. The URC established as its mission promoting empowerment and self-sufficiency opportunities for area residents by focusing on drug prevention, employment and educational opportunities and expanding transportation and community services. Their motto, Linking Together for Success, reveals their approach to doing business. URC leadership repeated the theme of "let's work together" when meeting with partners or potential partners. Utilizing the expertise of CTAA staff to guide their progress, they consistently pursued and strengthened their partnerships with local government, agencies and businesses.

The strategy that evolved added the role of transit system operator to the URC Transit's role as

"The URC had a strong vision of where they wanted to go. We only had to help them with ideas of how to get there."

— Barbara Rasin Price  
CTAA staff member

advocate/organizer/ planner of transportation services. The organization would provide drivers to operate transit vehicles and manage a program providing transportation to job sites not served by adequate public transportation. Local government and agencies would provide the expertise in planning and would donate needed equipment and operating funds while assisting with writing grants for additional long-term funding. The URC Transit agency would develop routes based upon individual rider needs, which is something the public transportation system is unable to do.

### Mobilizing Resources

Aware of the importance of establishing a track record of success to convince funding agencies to provide long-term funding, the URC sought resources to initiate a pilot project. The pilot project would demonstrate to potential funding agencies the need for, and value of, community-based transit services.

Members of the URC met with BCMT to discuss how URC could provide a flexible, rider-responsive transportation service, create jobs in the community and become a training and employment site for residents. URC's positive approach and commitment to succeed convinced BCMT to help.

Ongoing technical assistance from CTAA was particularly helpful in guiding the URC. Ms. Brown-McVane, chair of the URC transportation committee was placed in the CTAA Peer-to-Peer Program which paired her with people in other communities who had practical experience in planning and operating transportation projects. The housing authority provided assistance in grant writing in order to pursue funding needed for project start-up and initial operation.

Following the adoption of a URC Transit business plan, the housing authority provided two vans and agreed to assist with vehicle maintenance. BCMT suggested that a contract be developed between the city and their agency so that the city could provide URC with a 16-passenger bus and operating funds. Broward Transit offered to train URC drivers and include them in their drug testing pool.

At the same time, URC members were working with employers to see if jobs would be offered to qualified residents if transportation were provided. The URC, city manager and BCMT Planning Division began meeting with the Boca Raton Resort, located approximately 30 miles from the property, to seek commitments for jobs. The resort expressed great interest as they were struggling with two major problems: not enough employees to meet demand and too few employee parking spaces. They agreed to offer jobs if employees had group transportation to the site.

In January 1997, resort staff came to Sunnyreach Acres Townhouses to hold two one-day job fairs, recruit for available positions and interview interested residents for openings paying \$6 to \$10 per hour. Resort staff interviewed 75 residents and hired 12. The following month, nine residents boarded the inaugural URC Transit shuttle to the resort. After the success of the initial job fair, URC Transit arranged for the Registry Resort and Spa to hold a recruitment fair the following May. This was followed in June 1997 by another Boca Raton Resort fair.

The pilot effort of URC Transit operated for eight months until September 1997 when the initial funds were exhausted. However, URC Transit's pilot operation had established a market for services and a track record for management. During the winter months, services were curtailed due to limited funding. URC applied to several agencies for funding to cover operation and the acquisition of a mini-bus. By spring 1998, the city, county and state had been sufficiently persuaded by the progress of URC Transit to contribute funds to begin full, long-term operation with a fleet of three vans.

### Barriers Encountered

The path to success was not without roadblocks and hurdles. The obstacles and how they were overcome are not unique to URC Transit. Major barriers faced in developing the project are discussed below. They provide insight as to how Neighborhood Networks centers and other groups can avoid or overcome similar difficulties as they develop their own transportation services.

- ☐ **Financial Assistance.** There was no ready source of seed money for planning and implementing a transit program. By developing partnerships with local organizations and piecing together different types of assistance (from grant-writing assistance to driver training and CDBG funds), the URC was able to build a program.
- ☐ **Legal Requirements.** Several legal steps slowed the process. While the legal agreement between the county and the city was necessary to channel funds from the county to the URC Transit, delays in preparing the legal documents

slowed the project's start-up. Setting up the nonprofit agency was a new and somewhat mysterious experience for most of the residents and required great patience. An unexpected problem arose when the council tried to purchase liability and collision insurance. Insurers were hesitant to provide insurance to a new agency with no track record. Eventually, an insurance company was found to provide the necessary coverage.

- ☐ **Driver Training.** Each driver was required to obtain a commercial driver's license and meet the requirements of the Drug Free Workplace Act. The BCMT agreed to place the drivers under their drug free testing program and train the drivers to qualify for a commercial license.
- ☐ **Inexperience in Operating a Transportation Business.** Residents did not have prior experience with transit issues. However, members of the committee aggressively went about learning what they needed to know. They were assisted by BCMT, CTAA staff and peer volunteers from other communities. The housing authority worked with URC Transit to develop a business plan and set up financial accounting systems.
- ☐ **Progress Delays.** There were several slow-downs and a major reduction in service while URC Transit awaited funding. The perseverance of URC committee members and their belief that they would succeed overcame the lapses in momentum.
- ☐ **A Lack of Child Care Services.** Many of the tenants, who might otherwise have taken jobs at the resorts and other suburban businesses, found the wages offered were insufficient to pay for child care and still meet their other obligations. In addition, the unavailability of late night child care was a major reason why residents could not accept late-shift jobs. A lack of accessible and affordable child care remains a significant barrier to employment. The URC is currently preparing a request for funding for on-site child care services to overcome this hurdle.

## Lessons Learned

While the URC Transit experience is not a blueprint for success, we can learn a number of important lessons from their experience. The lessons described below relate primarily to transit systems, but many may be useful to groups developing other types of community-based services or activities:

- ☐ **Think Big, Start Small and Build.** Don't be restricted in your thinking about what can and should be done. You will probably not achieve your objectives quickly and should be prepared for delays and setbacks, but always keep in mind your overall vision. Starting small usually results in a program that is manageable. It is often easier to find supporters and funds for activities which are small in scope, including pilot projects that help demonstrate the worth of the activity and propel you toward a larger project.
- ☐ **Find a Core Working Group.** Dedicated people who are willing to volunteer long hours for future rewards are important to help overcome hurdles. Spreading the workload among several volunteers will make the job more feasible and help maintain high energy levels during project startup and throughout the planning and development stages. The commitment of the members of the URC was instrumental to the program's success.
- ☐ **Organize for Success.** A decision on the best form of organization for planning and implementing the project must be made in the early stages of planning. Many groups decide to establish nonprofit organizations. This provides them a legal status and often opens the door for funding opportunities not available to for-profit groups. Be aware, however, that starting a nonprofit is a detailed and time-consuming process.
- ☐ **Seek Help.** Learn from other people's mistakes. Ask questions. URC Transit was able to eliminate several problems by obtaining early expert advice from peers who faced similar difficulties in the planning, development and operation stages. CTAA is an excellent place to start, but there are often resources closer to

home, such as similar programs operating in nearby communities and local city or county planning staff.

- ☐ **Encourage Local Support.** The early support of local transit agencies and city or county government staff is critical to the planning and funding process. You may also find that the congressional delegation, the mayor, city council members and the state department of transportation are helpful at certain stages of development. Keep them informed. Government officials typically are more helpful if they have at least been made aware of your effort.
- ☐ **Assess Needs and Resources.** Surveys of potential riders and service providers or employers will demonstrate that you are serious and have carefully considered the needs of the community. Assessing need will help demonstrate the extent of the problem to others and better define it for you. You will then be able to speak with more authority. In addition, a survey is often an effective method of advertising and informing the community on what you are doing. An assessment of resources should be conducted early in the planning process. This will also help identify areas of potential support and funding.
- ☐ **Identify the Market and the Systems Already in Place.** Identify the transportation systems operating in the community, both formal and informal. You may be able to coordinate with an existing program. Assessing current programs will also reduce duplication or competition. Consider how people are being served and how you might be able to enhance service for your clients. Remember that the riders are not your only clients; the social services agencies and employers who want the residents to arrive at their doors are also clients. They may have funds or other resources to help defray some of the costs if they are convinced of the benefit.
- ☐ **Don't Limit Your Ideas.** CTAA staff is quick to remind that "you are not just putting vehicles on the road. You are managing mobility." During the planning and design stages, avoid limiting

your thinking to what type of vehicle or method of transportation to use. There are many ways to provide mobility that do not include purchasing expensive vehicles. Carpools, cab vouchers, bus passes/tokens, loaned vans, mileage reimbursement, volunteer drivers, bicycles and private cars are among the alternatives. A combination of several strategies may best meet your needs.

- ☐ **Secure Funding.** All the effort in the world will not ensure sustained success. Few projects can sustain themselves without outside funding, at least initially. Unless your project is very limited in scope, it will be necessary to write grant applications. Grant writers usually cost money, but local government and transit agencies have professional staff whose primary job is preparing grant applications and they can be of great help as partners. Volunteers can also fill this need. Don't limit requests to money. Inventory your needs. Use the results of the assessment of resources to think locally and nationally. Remember that national grant agencies often expect, if not require, that local government and agencies invest in your project. Start locally before seeking federal financial resources. Don't forget that when starting out, loaned or donated secondhand equipment is much easier to obtain than new equipment. The URC Transit began operations with donated equipment and a promise of operating and maintenance assistance from the housing authority.
- ☐ **Seek Links to Other Programs or Needs.** Think about the links between transportation to essential destinations such as jobs and child care. The URC negotiated with employers and facilitated job fairs for potential employers while setting up transportation services for residents. In addition, links with other aspects of self-sufficiency may lead to additional funding support or riders. For example, the Welfare to Work initiatives and the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) may offer opportunities for coordination.

## The Road to Sustainability

There are two keys to sustainability:

- ☐ **Financial Stability** — Public transportation services require ongoing public funding. Consumers simply cannot pay the full cost of operation. Therefore, full self-sufficiency should not be a goal for community-based transit. Local public assistance in operating and maintaining service is essential to long-term viability. A reasonable goal is to eliminate dependence on financial assistance from outside the community. National and regional funding sources are less reliable, and it is much easier to justify continued funding to local governments, agencies and businesses by demonstrating the benefits to citizens, residents, employees and voters in the community. It is also important to view riders, the service providers and employers as beneficiaries of the program and therefore sources of contributions to keep the service in operation.
- ☐ **An Active, Ongoing Organization** — People who are empowered will often overcome adversity. A strong organization able to marshal volunteers and willing to collaborate with existing agencies and other service providers has an excellent chance of attaining stability.

A well-thought-out sustainability plan should be developed as part of a business plan to ensure success. The sustainability plan should include the following:

- ☐ Identification of, and requests for, assistance from all beneficiaries of the program.
- ☐ A strong, targeted education program to ensure the program is well-known in the community.
- ☐ Accurate recordkeeping of use and benefit.
- ☐ A budgeting and fund-raising strategy that includes equipment replacement.
- ☐ Community fund-raising activities to demonstrate to public funding agencies that they are partners rather than sole providers.



- ☐ Utilization of existing expertise and equipment from local agencies and businesses, including training drivers, maintaining vehicles, vehicle parts and used equipment.
- ☐ A volunteer recruitment program and meaningful, rewarding tasks for volunteers.
- ☐ Community involvement in making decisions about important policy issues.

## Help to Develop Local Transportation Activities

Information, technical assistance and financial resources are available to Neighborhood Networks centers seeking to establish transportation services for their residents. Some of these resources are described below.



### Information/Technical Assistance

**National Transit Resource Center.** Three primary services are provided by the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) through its National Transit Resource Center. First, center staff provide the public information on a range of transportation subjects, including contacts for model programs, research and data and funding resources. Second, the center's Peer-to-Peer Program pairs organizations just beginning to develop transportation projects with people and agencies that are already operating similar transportation systems to answer specific questions. In addition, they can send a peer to provide on-site technical assistance. Training and consulting services are available for both urban and rural areas to help in planning and operating transportation services. Third, the organization publishes *Community Transportation*, a magazine that provides a wealth of information, including a resource guide to funding, agencies and associations, as well as information on purchasing transportation equipment.



Address 1341 G St., NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
 1-800-527-8279  
 <http://www.ctaa.org/resource>  
 E-mail [resources@ctaa.org](mailto:resources@ctaa.org)

## Financial Resources



**Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation.** The most commonly used funding source is the FTA, which generally disburses its assistance through state departments of transportation. Through the JOBLINKS Program, the FTA provides grants for innovative employment transportation initiatives.

Address 400 Seventh St., SW, TPM-10  
Washington, DC 20590  
 202-366-4043  
 <http://www.fta.dot.gov>

**Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA).** The Association, through its Community Transportation Development Fund, provides low interest loans up to \$150,000 as bridge financing for new vehicles, facility construction and local funding match.

Address 1341 G St., NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005  
 1-800-527-8279  
 <http://www.ctaa.org/resource>  
 E-mail [resources@ctaa.org](mailto:resources@ctaa.org)

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.** A locally available source of funds for transit activities, planning, facilities or equipment serving low- and moderate-income persons is the Community Development Block Grant Program. These funds are distributed to cities with populations greater than 50,000, large counties and states.

Address 451 Seventh St., SW  
Washington, DC 20410  
 1-800-998-9999  
 <http://www.hud.gov>

## Other Promising Transportation Models

Transportation models come in all sizes. There are programs that use carpools, cab vouchers, bus passes/tokens, loaned vans, mileage reimbursement, volunteer drivers, bicycles and private cars. A combination of several of these may best meet local needs. The following are examples of programs providing transportation to work operating nationwide.



**ATAC Coordinated Transportation Services (Richland County, Ohio).** Sixteen private and public social service agencies pooled their vans to develop a coordinated transportation service for low-income residents, filling gaps and reducing duplication in the existing transportation system. Each agency submits its standard route to a trip "broker" who reviews all schedules for duplication in trips and timing. As new trip requests are called in to the broker, they are checked with the existing schedules for matches or possible adjusted matches. Included in the resources are the vans of all the collaborating agencies, the public bus system and a taxi company. The system is used for a wide variety of transportation needs, including medical appointments, job testing, access to services and ongoing trips to work or school.

Contact Kathy Wigton, Richland County  
Regional Planning Commission  
☎ 419-774-5685

**The Freewheels Program (Northern Colorado).** Four cities north of Denver have acquired bicycles through donations and have refurbished them for reuse. The road-worthy bicycles are then loaned for use under two programs. Under the Business Loaner Program, businesses request bicycles to station at the office to be used by their employees for errands, meetings and commuting. Under the Bicycle Library Program, individuals can check out bicycles for their personal use for up to six months at time.

Contact Mr. Kelley Roberts, Transportation  
Department, City of Fort Collins  
☎ 970-224-6126  
💻 [www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/c\\_transportation/SMARTTrips/freewheels.html](http://www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/c_transportation/SMARTTrips/freewheels.html)

**The Wheels for Work Program (Anne Arundel County, Maryland).** This county program matches 30 low-cost, used vehicles per year with 30 low-income parents whose only barrier to a job is the lack of affordable and reliable transportation. The county motor pool donates older cars with 80,000 or more miles to nonprofit organizations. Cars from private

donors are also accepted. The local job center screens potential customers for traffic fines and violations, verifies employment and evaluates whether their income is sufficient to pay for insurance and maintenance of the car. The county assists by paying insurance for the first two months. The purchase price is based on the initial repair costs (averaging \$500) plus title and transfer fees, which are deducted from the customer's 60-month lifetime limit of cash assistance.

Contact Vesta Kimble, Director  
Anne Arundel County Department of  
Social Services  
☎ 410-269-4603

### **Residents at Neighborhood Networks Centers Take Advantage of Transportation Services**

Residents and staff of properties with Neighborhood Networks centers are actively creating transportation links with other services and activities to expand opportunities for residents. A great deal of information on methods of providing transportation to residents already exists at centers. Centers can become active in developing transportation linkages. Centers interested in either creating new transportation services or improving existing services are encouraged to contact other centers with similar goals and programs. There are a number of Neighborhood Networks centers including centers in Alabama, Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia that have taken steps to develop transportation links to services and events. Few currently offer transportation to employment sites although centers in Alabama and West Virginia are in the process of creating job transportation services. Centers in California, Colorado, Hawaii and Nevada have transportation programs or are in partnership with public or private transportation providers.

The following are some examples of Neighborhood Networks centers that provide transportation services for residents:

**Anna Dupree Neighborhood Network Center — Anna Dupree Terrace Apartments (Houston, Texas).** A van owned by the 151-unit property provides residents with transportation on scheduled trips for shopping, community events and classes at no cost to the residents.

Contact      Rudolph Rasmus  
☎              713-864-6033

**Operation P.E.A.C.E. Reach Out Center – Village of Bedford Pines (Atlanta, Georgia).** This 700-unit apartment complex developed transportation services for seniors in partnership with a major grocery store located some three miles away. The center negotiated with the store manager of Krogers Groceries to provide pickup and drop-off services for its seniors twice a week for shopping trips, using the store's mini-van. In addition, a collaborative effort with local transit, has resulted in bus tokens for seniors and children at the center.

Contact      Edna Moffett  
☎              404-892-8004

**Advanced Technology Center — Chevy Chase (Mexico, Missouri).** Arrangements have been made with a local cab company to obtain a reduction in rates for residents of the 62-unit apartment building who travel to and from the Neighborhood Networks center. In addition, the department of social services provides up to \$5 per day to defray transportation and child care expenses for participants.

Contact      Susan Stegemoeller  
☎              314-539-6355

**Kansas City Combined Transportation (Kansas City, Missouri).** Six HUD-assisted properties and the Kansas City Housing Authority have combined resources to provide transportation to services and activities for youth and seniors living in a 15-block area with over 1,000 subsidized apartment units. The housing authority shares its vans and the HUD-assisted properties share bus service obtained through drug elimination grant funds to take youth to

4-H events, sports activities and youth leadership camps, and take the seniors to services throughout the metropolitan area.

Contact      Kellie Svoboda  
                HUD Kansas City Area Office  
                Community Builder  
☎              913-551-6946

E-mail        [kellie\\_svoboda@hud.gov](mailto:kellie_svoboda@hud.gov)

**Family Development Center — Prichard Comprehensive (Prichard, Alabama).** Six properties (St. Stephens Woods, Leeds Street Cooperative, Townhouse Square, Parkside Apartments, Center Ridge Apartments and the Prichard Housing Authority) have joined together to provide continuously operating daily bus service for youth and adults to attend classes and services offered at the Family Development Center. Rides are also available for participants in youth soccer leagues and other youth sports activities. The center purchased two 15-passenger vans and hired drivers from among the residents to operate services for the 700 apartments in the properties. Funds to support the project come from the properties (the six properties have pooled a portion of their individual project funds into a \$330,000 annual budget for the services at the Comprehensive Neighborhood Networks Center). The center is working to set up emergency job transportation services to provide temporary assistance to employed residents whose cars have broken down or who otherwise are temporarily without transportation to their places of work.

Contact      Frank Nelson  
☎              334-457-6004

**Dunbar Abrams Community Center — The Pines and Peppertree Apartments (Bessemer, Alabama).** These two properties, comprised of 150 apartments, joined with the Bessemer Housing Authority, the City of Bessemer and the school district to obtain transportation for youth and adults on a fixed route basis for late afternoon activities and classes.

School buses drop off youth at 3 p.m. for after-school activities at the Neighborhood Networks center and then return at 6 p.m. to pick up both youth and adults who are involved in activities at the center and drop them off at eight locations near their apartments. The expense of operating the buses is funded through a \$25,000 Community Development Block Grant.

Contact Gwendolyn Alexander  
☎ 205-426-8434

**Versailles Arms Learning Center — Versailles Arms (New Orleans, Louisiana).** Residents of the 400-unit complex are provided group transportation in vans leased by the Versailles Arms Learning Center, a nonprofit organization, on an as-needed basis. Residents use the service to attend job fairs, reach social services and to take training and tests to obtain their General Equivalency Diploma (GED). They also have arranged with the transit agency to provide bus tokens for individuals. The center was successful in writing grant applications for the funds to provide transportation and other services for the residents.

Contact Antonio Gibson  
☎ 504-254-3718

**Oakwood Terrace Neighborhood Networks Center (NNC), Vandelia Terrace NNC, Southmoore Hills NNC and Orchard Manor NNC — The West Virginia Multi-County Consortium (Charleston, West Virginia).** Four properties, each with its own Neighborhood Networks center sites, in a five-county area, are served by Multi-County Community Action Against Poverty's transportation services. The nonprofit agency provides rides to residents of the 950 apartment units in the consortium to social services, food banks, medical appointments and youth summer camps. The 22-person van also serves as a link to the existing, but distant, public bus system. Approximately 50 persons a day utilize the van. Plans are being developed to increase the number of vans to five, expand service to link with job sites and better integrate the existing child care program into the service.

Contact Kevin Dyer  
☎ 304-342-1300 ext. 245  
www.multi-cap.org  
E-mail kdyer@multi-cap.org

*For More Information about Neighborhood Networks, visit the national website at:*

☎: <http://www.hud.gov.nnw/nnwindex.html>

*Call the Neighborhood Networks  
Information Center at:*

☎ 1-888 312-2743  
TTY 703-934-3230

*Or write:*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Neighborhood Networks  
9300 Lee Highway  
Fairfax, VA 22031-1207

